

For THE COUNTY PAPER.
LITTLE THINGS.

But our deeds are like children born to us;
they live and act apart from our own will.—*George Eliot.*

It is a solitary flower that lifts its head above the masses and waving grasses upon the brooklet's bank. The season advanced. Its bursting ovaries cast their contents about heedless of the neighbor's jealousy. Another summer has come. Many barrels now greet the occasional wayfarer, with their countenances of blue.

A single stalk of nightshade glistening in its foliage of deep, dark green, obscures its poisonous breath, upon the surrounding air. Autumn has gone and come bringing a numerous generation to the deadly plant.

So in the fruitful soil of the mind are the germs of good and evil, each to increase after its kind according to the understanding and will of the individual. Truth, loyalty, love and beauty will, like the hair-bell, spread their glory around, if only their full, rich seed be not blighted in the opening.

Thus in life, the indulgence of a single weakness, or the commission of one fault in one short season, may gratify or entertain; but as months go by, a myriad posterity follows: regret, remorse, misery. The poisonous rootlets have permeated the entire mind until the life is impregnated with them fruits. All varieties of character, from the darkest shade of depravity to the purest example of unselfishness and goodness, find their degrees in the number of sin's thought, favored, received.

What an old story it is and how few believe it! An act of impatience over a trifle is not a great crime except as the progenitor of a line of descendants which end in the destruction of everything amiable or agreeable in one's nature. How is the moral power weakened and the will blunted? There is something in the old doctrine of fatality. Of all who degenerate by slaving against themselves, how many retract their steps? In an important sense, is it not impossible? Who shall say what the possible attainments to those who have not yielded the first concession to an evil impulse. Or, how many acts of penitence, fasting, prayer and self-denial will be required to restore what may be lost. The human mind, like its body, will not be gashed with at the sear. Who does not know that vexations multiply as vexations are lingered over; that one fit of one anchor will yield a dozen.

In a mediaeval fiction from the pen of a gifted author, there appears a character which so powerfully illustrates the effect, upon the conscience, of a misdeed, the condition in which the internal man and the external are thrown and the load of inevitable consequences from which nothing, save a miracle, could deliver. No vital truth could be made more exquisite or impressive, than the scene of the anchor's weight of self-deception and its results.

The personage is a young man of unusual abilities, nonetheless, dignity and commanding comeliness. His first mistake was an attempted self-delusion in which but half succeeded, and which ended in a flagrant act of ingratitude—toward his adopted father. He afterwards persists in this against his conscience and better judgment. The love he bears a noble lady confirms and accuses him by turns. He soon ceases to feel the wrong he has done to himself, and is on y concerned lest the fair lady detect his want of manhood. By his unholiness, he is soon deprived of every virtuous impulse; his love alone for a time remaining untainted. But that one who meets the difficulties of life by persuading himself out of its responsibilities, or weakens wherever a test is given his courage, or who owes the opinion of the world more than his own conscientious approval, will not scruple to sacrifice even his love with that of those most dear, if he can but carry his unrighteous purposes. And often, as in this case, the very end of all others to be gained, will itself be thwarted and go down in the common run.

The love of a superior wife is at last crushed, by the darkest sins life can furnish, and the end is an oblivious death. Throughout this marvelous career is clearly seen the conflict between the evil and the good. At first the victory for the right seems almost certain; but as the warfare continues, strength forsakes the vanquished whose successive oppositions become more and more feeble. Then the last state of a torpid conscience is reached, from which it can be roused only by the startling realities of eternity. A true picture, which too many experience will confirm: "What a piece of work is man."

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